MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS,
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., JANUARY 7, 1921.

The fourth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1921 was held in its office at 1729 New York Avenue, northwest, Washington, D. C., Friday, January 7, 1921.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman;
Mr. Platt;
Mr. Wm. Mitchell Kendall;
Mr. Greenleaf;
Mr. Fraser;

also Major C. S. Ridley, Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS: The minutes of the preceding meeting held in Washington, D. C., November 13, 1920, and of the Committee meeting held in New York City November 20, 1920, were approved.

2. VERDUN MEDAL: Mr. Fraser reported that eight models for the Verdun Medal had been submitted pursuant to the program of competition which expired December 31, 1920. The Commission decided that a Committee meeting should be held in Mr. Fraser's studio, New York City, in a few days to inspect the models.

3. SITE FOR JEANNE D'ARC MEMORIAL: Mr. Moore reported that he had been in conference with Ambassador Jusserand regarding a site for the Jeanne D'Arc statue and that his preference is on the terrace of Meridian Hill Park. As to erecting the statue in front of the proposed new French Embassy the Ambassador advised that it would have to be so placed so that it would be recognized as a National monument rather than a French monument. Mr. Moore stated that he then took up the matter with Paul Cret, architect, who has

been in consultation with Ambassador Jusserand concerning the site, and he concurs with him in this matter. (Exhibit A). The Commission decided that if agreeable to the French Ambassador and to Paul Cret to have the statue placed in front of the new location of the French Embassy it would meet their approval, and if not, it is agreeable to the Commission to place the statue at the south end of the mall in Meridian Hill Park.

4. ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL: Under date of January 5, 1921, Mr. Hermann Hagedorn, Secretary of the Roosevelt Memorial Association, advised Mr. Moore in the following letter as to their desire to have an inspection made of the model of the Roosevelt Memorial:

> "Colonel Thompson and Mr. Root would be very glad if you might find occasion to come to New York within the next week or ten days to visit Mr. Akeley's studio with them and discuss with them and with Mr. Akeley and Mr. Brite certain details in regard to the tentative model which Mr. Root's committee is asking the sculptor and the architect to prepare. As I wrote you, Mr. Root's committee decided, in deference to Mrs. Roosevelt's well known wishes, to ask Mr. Akeley and Mr. Brite to make a model and to present drawings and designs which would enable the members of Mr. Root's committee, as well as the members of the National Fine Arts Commission, adequately to judge the merits of the Akeley-Brite project. Mr. Root is desirous, before asking the Executive Committee for an appropriation to cover the preparation of the model and the designs, to discuss with you the character of the model that you and the other members of the Fine Arts Commission favor.
>
> Would it be possible for you to attend a conference in New York some time next week? If you will let me know when you can be in town, I will make the necessary arrangements with Mr. Root and Colonel Thompson, as well as with Mr. Akeley and Mr. Brite."

The Commission again gave the whole problem of a suitable memorial to Theodore Roosevelt in Washington most careful consideration and agreed to the following:

A location on Sixteenth Street would be a proper site for a Memorial to Theodore Roosevelt.

There are two locations on Sixteenth Street to be considered, first, the site near Alaska Avenue; second, a site near Vanburen Street. The former is a high hill with land sloping sharply into Rock Creek Park; the Vanburen Street site is a level space. It would seem difficult to adopt the scheme as presented in the model to the Alaska Avenue site. The scheme would be unsatisfactory to the Vanburen Street site.

To place the Roosevelt Memorial on a site off Sixteenth Street would give the Memorial a subordinate position. It is a question whether the treatment proposed in the model can be carried out successfully as to its landscape features, especially the planting of trees on a high level. Moreover, it is also a question whether, if the planting could be carried out, the form of the scheme would be worth the sacrifice of selecting a site unrelated to the plan of Washington.

The Commission would prefer to have a study made for the Memorial as related to one or both of the Sixteenth Street sites.

The members decided to meet at Mr. Akeley's studio in New York City in a few days to inspect the model and confer with Mr. Root and Colonel Thompson who are also expected to attend the meeting.

5. SUCCESSOR TO WM. SERGEANT KENDALL: The Commission unanimously agreed upon the appointment of Henry Siddons Mowbray, painter, of Connecticut, and formerly Director of the American Academy in Rome, as successor to Wm. Sergeant Kendall, resigned.

6. SUCCESSOR TO CHARLES A. PLATT: The Commission unanimously agreed upon the appointment of Henry Bacon, architect, of New York City, as successor to Charles A. Platt, whose four year term expired September 1, 1920.

7. AMERICAN CEMETERIES IN FRANCE: Major George Gibbs, Jr., landscape architect, appeared before the Commission and reported that he has been detailed

and appointed to the Office of the Chief of Graves Registration Service, Office of the Quartermaster General, to take charge of the plans for the development of the American Cemeteries in France.

8. SITE FOR THE FIRST DIVISION MEMORIAL: The Commission agreed to the erection of the Memorial of the First Division on the square south of the State, War and Navy Building and north of B Street, subject to the approval by Congress of the location of the Memorial at that place, the exact point to be located when the design of the monument shall be established.

9. MEADE MEMORIAL: The Commission approved the plaza design of walks and curbs for the Meade Memorial. The Commission recommended that the architects, Simon and Simon, of Philadelphia, adopt the type of bench suggested by the Commission in their letter to them under date of December 2, 1920. (Exhibit B).

10. PARK FOR PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA: Major Ridley stated he had received a letter from Mr. Louis Brownlow, City Manager, of Petersburg, Virginia, requesting the advice of the Commission in the matter of laying out a park for the city, and desired that they make a personal inspection of the area. The Commission stated that it would not be possible for them to visit Petersburg but that they would be pleased to give consideration to a preliminary sketch or plan of the park at any time should he forward one to them. (Exhibit C).

11. SOLDIERS MEMORIAL CROSS: Through the Office of the Quartermaster General a design for a Soldiers Memorial Cross to be erected by the American Women's Legion was brought before the Commission. The Commission were agreeable to the erection of the Cross at Arlington but thought improvements could be made in the design. Mr. Alfred Granger, Chicago, Illinois, the architect, was advised accordingly. (Exhibit D).

12. KEY BRIDGE: Major Ridley reported that the Chief of Engineers had

referred to the Commission a letter from Mr. C. E. Fowler, Consulting Engineer, of New York City, recommending changes in the plan for the Key Bridge without, however, stating fully the changes desired by him. Upon inquiry at the office of Major Tyler, Office of the Chief of Engineers, who has immediate supervision in the construction of the Bridge, it was ascertained that the Bridge is being built according to the plan approved by the Commission of Fine Arts and the Secretary of War, and that purchases for the Bridge have about all been made. The Commission decided that inasmuch as Mr. Fowler did not specify clearly the changes he would make in the plan, and in view of the fact that the Bridge is about completed, they disapprove making any change in the approved plan. (Exhibit E).

13. PEARY MEMORIAL: A revised design of the Admiral Peary Memorial to be erected at Arlington was submitted to the Commission by Mr. Harry L. Davis which the Commission approved with the suggestion that some sculpture be placed at the four corners of the pedestal on which the sphere is to rest. (Exhibit F).

14. DUPONT CIRCLE: Five preliminary sketch plans were presented to the Commission each showing possible schemes of revision of the existing circle as per the 10 scale survey of November, 1920.

Plan "A" showed a formal grass panel on each of the extensions of New Hampshire and Massachusetts Avenues across the circle and in which the outside boundaries of the sidewalks of the above avenues and the adjacent tree lines were also continued across the park area. The remaining streets were treated as being of secondary character by using a single walk axing on the center line of the street except in certain cases where a single walk would accommodate the necessary pedestrian traffic for one or more streets.

Plan "B" as designed by Major Ridley showed a sidewalk of necessary

width to accommodate pedestrian traffic from the center line of each avenue and street across the circle and retaining the present gravel path entirely inside the present shrub planting.

Plan "C" showed a plan combining the axing of the avenues and certain streets only with the walks proposed with the remaining walks so arranged as to not only afford convenient foot traffic but also better divide the grass space in the circle.

Plan "D" as designed by Mr. Greenleaf showed a path system of suitable width axing on the center lines of the various avenues and streets and intersecting the central fountain motif - around the pool of which was shown a circular grass strip of approximately 10' width and an open circular plaza treatment of some suitable walk material, possibly a mosaic, of an approximate width of 35' - which scheme would permit of a proper recognition of the dominance of the central motif and allow a convenient seating arrangement under the shelter of the fine large trees which enframe the central composition.

Plan "E" showed a walk system radiating from the central fountain motif outward toward the proposed "isles of safety", the latter located off the avenue and street lines.

In the general discussion, it was the unanimous opinion of the Commission that the open plaza treatment of Mr. Greenleaf's Plan "D" around the fountain was most desirable. Also the walk treatment simplified the question of foot traffic across the park. Further discussion of Plan "A" brought out that the formal grass panel treatment, recognizing New Hampshire and Connecticut Avenues, was also worthy of further study and using cross walks across the park which axed on the secondary streets.

Further study was recommended of Plan "A" using Mr. Greenleaf's central plaza treatment in combination with the above walk revision and a further develop-

ment of Mr. Greenleaf's study Plan "D".

15. LINCOLN MEMORIAL: ROAD SECTIONS, PROFILE AND PLAN FOR CIRCULAR DRIVE AND EAST APPROACH: Two drawings were presented as Plan "A" and Plan "B", based on the elevations of the approved grading plan as approved by the Commission of Fine Arts on June 30, 1919. In Plan "A", the method of treatment assumes a typical difference in elevation of the inner and outer curbs of the 60' diameter circular road of 0.33' and recognizes the problem of adjusting the circular road approach to each platform so that a feeling of continuity and ease of approach is realized and, at the same time, warp the road surface in such a manner that at no point will the road appear sunken in relation to the platform or to the approach from either direction. This is accomplished by reducing the road approach grade for a distance of 300' in either direction from the mall axis to a grade of 0.3 of 1% gradient - and so modeling the road surface to a slightly convex outline from the gutter bordering the upper platform to the gutter adjacent to the lower platform. In regard to the cross section, the crown was based on a 9" crown for the given road width and adjusted to the difference in curb elevations of the respective curbs by means of the formula for road crowns used by the Engineering Department of the District Government.

Both Mr. Greenleaf and Mr. Platt recommended this treatment as planned for the grading approach if it was desired to secure the most ideal grading possible not only due to the peculiar relation of the road to the platforms but also because, by so doing, the use of catch basins would be eliminated adjacent to the upper platform and the uniform curb reveal would thereby be maintained throughout the length of the upper platform.

In Plan "B", the method of treatment assumes a typical difference in elevation of the inner and outer curbs of the 60' diameter circular road of 11", in which the problem is to adjust the circular road approach to each platform so that the road will not appear sunken, when constructed. Basing the cross section on a 9" crown for the required road width, the high point of the road is main-

tained throughout its entire length at the same grade, thereby allowing the water to drain from the high point of the road toward each platform. A revision of this latter plan to conform to the existing platform grades (to be determined through a survey by the Engineering Department) and throwing the high point of the circular road somewhat nearer the upper platform, was advised by Colonel Ridley, and it was agreed that either plan would look well.

16. EAST POTOMAC PARK - PLANTING DETAIL OF GOLF GROUNDS: In accordance with the decision of the Committee of the Commission of Fine Arts on November 20, 1920, a revision of the mixed evergreen and deciduous planting as shown at that meeting, was presented embodying the use of a combined, coniferous, and broad-leaved evergreen planting so that the falling leaves of deciduous trees would not cause interference to golfers using the course.

Keeping in mind the advantage of having long vistas of turf and water from various vantage points, both from the interior and exterior of the course; the necessity for ease of police supervision and patrol; and the requirements of scale, it was felt essential to forego the use of shrubs and maintain the variety, interest and unity of the composition as a whole by the introduction of a pleasing variety of evergreen species varying in height, habit, texture and color, in order to secure the most harmonious planting composition possible. Taking into consideration the existing deciduous trees (which were not to be superseded by the proposed trees until such existing trees were unfit for park use) the planting plan was mainly characterized by the use of American Holly, (Ilex opaca), Austrian Pine (Pinus nigra var austriaca), White Pine (Pinus strobus) and Douglas Spruce (Psendotsuga taxifolia) and in lesser amounts by the use of Canadian Hemlock (Tsuga canadensis), Western Hemlock (Tsuga heterophylla) and Red Cedar (Juniperus virginiana). With the addition of several trees to certain large mass planting compositions, the plan was approved by the Commission as planned.

17. RESERVATION 276-A - GENERAL PLAN AND DETAIL OF COPING: The triangular area featured a large grass area planted to four American Elms and bordered along the edge of the area by a 7' brick sidewalk. Adjacent to this brick sidewalk was planned a clipped hedge 3' - 6" in width and 3' - 0" height, while the reservation was further set apart from the area belonging to the District by a cement coping of 6" reveal and 8" wide.

This plan was approved by the Commission.

18. MERIDIAN HILL PARK: The Commission made an inspection of the model, practically complete, for Meridian Hill Park. With regard to the West Ascent, the architect, Mr. Peaslee, raised questions about the treatment of the mid-way overlook, the wall enclosures below the cross walk and the relative importance of this ascent compared with the others.

It was generally agreed that the overlook could be brought forward to good advantage in accordance with the sketch shown; that owing to the changed topography below the cross axis, the treatment could vary from that above, -- hedges on both sides of the walk in place of balustrade on one side; and that the width of the ascent while in scale as viewed from the top was too great for the wall motif as viewed from below, -- warranting a reduction in width at the top.

Color: Attention was called by Mr. Platt to the dead tones of the walks. It was also agreed that the platform of the Buchanan Memorial should be an intermediate tone between the general paving and the marble of the memorial walls. Same tone to be used for paving of the exhedra.

Planting: Questions were raised by Mr. Kendall and Mr. Greenleaf about the height of the cedars and terrace elms. It was agreed that the elms should be increased in height to the scale indicated on the sketches. Mr. Greenleaf concurred in the suggestion of the architect that it would be very desirable to have some one from Mr. Vitale's office supervise the indication of the plant materials.

Lower Garden: On questions raised by the architect of lack of interest, it was agreed that the garden would be helped by closing the side step treatments and enclosing the turf panels with low borders, -- corners exposed to trespass to be rounded off; possible substitution of gravel or ivy along the pool; indication of mosaic; and the introduction of benches against the hedges.

Water: On questions raised about rising water and relative display, the Commission did not feel the need of the former; and considered the larger spouts at the sides of the cascades satisfactory.

Extent: It was felt that the east section of the park should be added to the model.

Display: Various suggestions were made about back-drop, susperded over-curtain, raised or lowered points of view, cut-outs, exhibition places and the like.

The Commission had as guests at their luncheon at the Cosmos Club Colonel C. C. Pierce, Chief, and Major George Gibbs, Jr., landscape architect, of the Graves Registration Service. After the luncheon the Commission visited Dupont Circle and saw the fountain in action. Thereupon the Commission returned to resume the Session and adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Approved:

C O P Y

PAUL PHILIPPE CRET, ARCHITECT
1535 Chestnut St., Philadelphia

December 24, 1920.

Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman,
Commission of Fine Arts,
1729 New York Avenue,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Moore:

In answering your letter on December 18, I was not aware that the French ambassador had informed you of his plans for the new location of the French Embassy. When I spoke of the location of the statue near the Embassy as undesirable, I had therefore in mind the old site.

I went yesterday with Mr. Jusserand to see the new site which he has advised the French government to secure. The park just in front of this site seems to provide a very desirable location for the statue. Your suggestion, therefore, is quite appropriate, both on account of the physical character of the site and the association due to the proximity of the French Embassy.

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Paul P. Cret.

PPC/F

EXHIBIT A.

COPY

January 8, 1921.

Dear Sirs:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting held in Washington January 7, 1921, approved your design of curbs and walks for the Meade Memorial, and I am returning the design to you herewith, showing the approval of the Commission.

The Commission disapproved your design for the benches, and recommend that you adopt the suggested design submitted to you with the letter from the Commission dated December 2, 1920.

The Commission will advise you later as to its decision with regard to the texture for the walks.

Sincerely, yours,

(signed) C. S. Ridley,

Major, Corps of Engineers,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Simon and Simon,

249 South Juniper Street,

Philadelphia, Pa.

EXHIBIT B.

COPY

January 8, 1921.

My dear Mr. Brownlow:

The Commission of Fine Arts met in Washington yesterday, at which time I brought to their attention your letter of January 3, concerning a proposed park for Petersburg.

The Commission request me to inform you that they regret that it will not be possible for them to come to Petersburg for a few days to make an inspection of the area. However they will be pleased to give consideration to a preliminary sketch or plan of the park at any time you may have one ready to forward to them. It would be of help if you would forward with the sketch or plan a few photographs of the area you intend using for the park.

Sincerely, yours,

(signed) C. S. Ridley

Major, Corps of Engineers,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Mr. Louis Brownlow,

City Manager,

Petersburg, Virginia.

EXHIBIT C.

C O P Y

January 10, 1921.

Dear Captain Granger:

As I told you last night, the Commission desire a model of the Soldiers Memorial Cross for Arlington. They thought you could improve upon the part where the cross proper joins the base and also they felt that if the lowest part of the base were half the height it would prove more satisfactory. When the model is submitted, will you please indicate the position at Arlington that you think desirable and the Commission will take up that matter also.

Cordially, yours,

(signed) Charles Moore.

Alfred Granger, Esq.,
619 North Michigan Avenue,
Chicago, Illinois.

EXHIBIT D.

C O P Y

January 8, 1921.

Sir:

With reference to your communication of December 20, transmitting a letter from Mr. Chas. E. Fowler, Consulting Engineer, New York City, suggesting changes in the design of the Georgetown bridge now under construction, and concerning which you desire the views and recommendations of the Commission of Fine Arts, the Commission requested me to state that inasmuch as Mr. Fowler does not indicate specifically the changes he would make in the plan of the bridge, and as the bridge has been built according to a plan approved by the Commission of Fine Arts and the Secretary of War, and is now nearly complete, they do not approve of making any change in the plan.

I am returning Mr. Fowler's letter herewith.

Very respectfully,

(signed) C. S. Ridley,

Major, Corps of Engineers,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Major General Lansing H. Beach,

Chief of Engineers,

War Department.

EXHIBIT E.

C O P Y

January 10, 1921.

Dear Mr. Davis:

I received your letter of December 28, and brought the blueprint of your design for the Admiral Peary Memorial to the attention of the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on January 7th.

The Commission approve the design, excepting for some sculpture, possibly bronze, on the four corners, as for instance that used by the Egyptians under the obelisk, which would give better support for the sphere and make a more beautiful design.

The Commission will await your plan for the inscriptions.

Sincerely, yours,

(signed) Charles Moore

Chairman.

Mr. Harry L. Davis, President,
The Davis Memorial Company,
Syracuse, New York.

EXHIBIT F.